
NEWS RELEASE

Judd Gregg



United States Senator for New Hampshire
393 Russell Building, Washington, D.C. 202-224-3324 www.senate.gov/~gregg/

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Contact: Erin Rath/Jeff Turcotte

GREGG ANNOUNCES FINAL \$8 MILLION FOR CONSERVATION OF FORMER IP LAND MOVES FORWARD

WASHINGTON -- U.S. Senator Judd Gregg (R-NH) today announced that \$8 million in federal funding is included in the Fiscal Year 2003 Omnibus Appropriations bill for the purchase of a conservation easement on the 146,000 acres of the Connecticut Lakes Headwaters tract to be owned by the Lyme Timber Company; 25,000 acres of the total 171,500 acre tract were recently transferred to the State of New Hampshire at a State House ceremony attended by Senator Gregg. The measure is currently pending before the Senate. When the bill is approved, these funds will complete the federal share of the total cost of a conservation easement on the land. Senator Gregg, a member of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on the Interior, served as a co-chair with former Governor Shaheen on the Connecticut Lakes Headwaters Task Force. Upon passage, expected in the next several days, the Omnibus measure will head to a joint House/Senate conference committee to work out differences before returning to both chambers for final passage. Senator Gregg secured an initial \$3.6 million in the Fiscal Year 2002 Interior Appropriations bill as an initial payment towards the land.

Senator Gregg stated, "The State of New Hampshire seized a once in a generation opportunity to preserve the multi-use tradition of this tremendous natural resource by working together with local, state and federal officials. Accounting for over 3% of our state's total land mass, the former International Paper land is a haven for recreation and tourism as well as a staple of the local economy in the New Hampshire North Country.

"The State of New Hampshire demonstrated its commitment by coming up with \$10 million in funding, and the Trust for Public Land did its part by purchasing the land and holding it in protected status until the remainder of the funding could be brought forth. The inclusion of this funding in the omnibus measure shows further commitment that Granite State residents and visitors for generations will be able to enjoy and benefit from the beauty and resources this land has to offer."

David Houghton, Director of the Northern New England Field Office of the Trust for Public Land, stated, "We are extremely grateful for Senator Gregg's leadership in ensuring that the \$8 million Forest Legacy appropriation needed for the Connecticut Headwaters project was included in the Senate's Omnibus Appropriations bill. His consistent support of this project has been essential, both in his role as Co-Chair of the Connecticut Lakes Headwaters Partnership Task Force and as member of the Interior Appropriations Committee. Forest Legacy funding is absolutely critical in the effort to conserve this land as the backbone of northern New Hampshire's culture and economy."

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Richard W. Moore, President of the Audubon Society of New Hampshire, stated, “The permanent protection of lands sold by IP in northern New Hampshire will be within sight if Congress holds up its end of the bargain. New Hampshire Audubon appreciates Senator Gregg’s critical role in calling together the coalition of North Country residents, conservation organizations, and other stakeholders to make this possible--and fighting for federal funding of a portion of the deal. I cannot imagine a single step with greater benefit for wildlife and for people in northern New Hampshire, for this generation and all to come.”

Following the announcement by the International Paper Company to sell the 171,500 acres of forest in July 2001, Senator Gregg worked with former Governor Shaheen, House Speaker Gene Chandler and Senate President Arthur Klemm to assemble the Connecticut Lakes Headwaters Partnership Task Force, a team of local, state and federal officials and private conservation organizations charged with developing a consensus approach, vision and funding mechanisms for protection of the IP lands. Senator Gregg co-chaired the Task Force, along with former Governor Shaheen, which issued a final report and recommendation in December 2001 for the protection of the IP lands, recreational public access for NH residents and visitors, the continuation of sustainable forestry, and the protection of ecologically sensitive resources. New Hampshire HB 1000, which was signed into law in May 2002, authorized \$10 million in state appropriations and directed the State of New Hampshire to acquire fee ownership and conservation easement interests on the land.

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